



Workplace Friendship: Linking With Employees' Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave - (A Case of University of Gondar)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the prevalence of workplace friendship as perceived by employees and its association with employees' job satisfaction and their intention to leave the university. Samples of 338 both academic and support staff were used in the study. Adopted and reliability tested research instruments were used. The result of the assessment shows that employees perceived the existence of good workplace friendship in the University. Most of them are dissatisfied with their job and they have intention to leave. But the effect of workplace friendship with employees' job satisfaction and intention to leave is found to be insignificant.

Key words: workplace Friendship, Job satisfaction, Employees' intention to leave

1. INTRODUCTION

The notion of friendship in the workplace is known as a necessary factor in terms of social relations essential to any organization. Despite the fact that there are several organizations which have established work environments that are naturally conducive to friendship, some conservative organizations resist the concept of workplace friendships for fear that it will create unnecessary Problems in the organization's work (Lynn, et al., 2001).

Employee's dissatisfaction and intention to leave are among many managerial problems manifested in many organizations. There could be antecedents or reasons for that. However, there are few researches that focused mainly on the effect of workplace friendship on managerial issues such as, employees' job satisfaction and employee's intention to leave. This study tried to address these issues in the case of University of Gondar Settings.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

To address the objectives of this study, a descriptive survey was carried out at the University of Gondar. The population of this study comprises 1560 Academic staff and 484 permanently employed support staff working particularly at (Human Resource, Finance, Registrar, and Library) directorates of the University. In total, 2044 employees were taken as the target population.

The sample size was 770 employees. To select these 770 samples, first proportional stratified sampling technique was employed in different directorate and colleges of the university. Simple random sampling technique used to select each respondent from the respective strata/directorate. At the end 338 workable questionnaires were collected.

The research tool used to measure *Workplace Friendship* was Adapted from Nielsen, et al. (2000). The instrument has 10 items remaining after Morrison's (2006) factor analyses. The Cronbach's Alpha test result of this tool is (0.835).

The second research instrument used to measure *employee job satisfaction* was also adapted from the measuring tool of Wood et al., 1986, and Puranai & Sahadev (2007). This research instrument has 11 questions and its reliability, Cronbach's Alpha test result was found to be (. 752).



Finally, three item construct adopted by the work of Jenkins (1993) was used to measure employee's *intention to leave* the organization. All items of the three instruments were rated on a five-point Likert type scales ranging from '1' "*strongly disagree*" to '5' "*strongly disagree*." But for the sake of simplification of the data analysis, the Likert scales "*strongly disagree and disagree*" and as well as *Strongly Agree and Agree* are combined and scales "*Disagree, Neutral and Agree*" are used for data analysis.

Table 1 Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Workplace friendship	. 0.835	10
Job satisfaction	.752	11
Employees' intention to leave	.868	3

1. Literature Review

3.1 Workplace Friendship

Friendship is intentional, personal relationship that provides closeness and support (Fehr, 1996). While, Workplace Friendship is deliberate associations that involve shared trust, give-and-take likes common interests and values rather than being only reciprocated friends (Berman et al., 2002; Wright, 1985). It focused on social contact occurred in the work environment (Song, 2005).

According to Fine (1986), Workplace friendship increases support that helps people realize their task, lessen work stress, and offer bigger cooperation and energy. Hamilton (2007) also pointed that if workplace friendship prevails, people might feel at ease with their workplace friends and reduces feelings of nervousness and uncertainty. Another positive consequence of friendship is its innate character to be a career-boosting relationship which offers work more fun, and enhances the individual creativeness (Sias & Cahill, 1998).

According to Kram and Isabella (1985) friendship has three categories: (a) *informational peer* that considered possessing some motivational character being the one who shares information contributing to doing good work performance, (b) *collegial peer*, the one that offers job-related comment and (c) *special peer* that provides emotional support and personal feed. (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Nielseet al., 2000) also mentioned that friendship in the workplace has two dimensional construct of *prevalence and opportunity*.

3.2 Job satisfaction

Satisfaction is the feeling of happiness, the attainment of needs, action of fulfilling desires and demand goals (Hornby and Cowie, 1995). Job satisfaction means an individual's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to a task as a result of assessment of task characteristics and task-related factors (Locke, 1976). It is how people feel about their tasks, diverse aspects of their works and the intensity to which employees like or dislike their tasks (Spector, 1997; Agho and Price, 1992). According to Spector, (1997) task satisfaction has nine facets: supervision, pay, benefits provided, promotion, nature of the work, contingent, and rewards, dealing with coworkers, operating procedures and policies, and communication. It is person's attitude and way of thinking about their job. Optimistic attitudes towards the task indicate job satisfaction. People toil to satisfy their natural needs, social and ideological. Apart from this, people work because working produces wealth (Ibid). Job satisfaction influences a variety of important aspects of the organization such as attitudes, intentions and behaviors. It is an extent to which one feels positively or negatively about aspects of one's job (Bhuian & Menguc, 2002). Employees develop attitudes toward such job aspects as co-workers, work variety, pay, promotion, organizational policies, and supervisors (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is a significant work-related attitude (Boles et al., 2003). In general, Job satisfaction is outcomes of good human resource management (Armstrong, 2006; Saiyadain, 1988).



3.3 Employees' intention to leave

According to Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, (2002), Employee's intention to leave is the manifestation of probability that an individual will alter his or her job within a certain period of time. It is considered an immediate predecessor to an actual employee resigns (Ibid). Intention to leave is an individual's effort to move across the membership boundary of an organization (Price, 2001). It basically captures the person's perception and evaluation of various job options (Mobley et al., 1979); not open since intentions are accounts about a specific behavior of interest (Berndt, 1981).

Satisfaction is consistently reported to be negatively related to employee's intention to leave (e.g. Hackett & Lapierre, 2001; Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Meyer, et al., 2002). In spite of those studies, limited or even no empirical research exist between workplace friendships and employee's intention to leave the organization. Overall, for contributing to the further understanding, this study tries to assess the effect of workplace friendships on job satisfaction and employee's employees' intention to leave.

3.4 Workplace Friendship and Job satisfaction

Friendships occur in workplace and have benefits or risks related to them (Milam, 2012). Workplace friendships create effects between individuals and their organization, one of which may be job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Individuals having better qualities of friendships at work environment are the people who are more satisfied with their jobs, (Winstead, et.al., 1995).

There is empirical evidence that co-worker relations are an antecedent of job satisfaction. For example, Markiewicz et al., (2000) found that the quality of close workplace friendships was related to both the career success and job satisfaction of employees. The study of Riordan & Griffeth, (1995) also indicated that friendship opportunities were associated with increases in job satisfaction and job involvement. These findings are supported by the study of Nielsen, et al., (2000). Nielsen et al. also reported a positive correlation between friendship opportunities, friendship prevalence and job satisfaction. These findings highlight the positive impact workplace friendships can have for employees within organizations, particularly in terms of their satisfaction with their jobs. According to Nielsen, et al., (2000), if there are better opportunities for friendship, the prevalence of friendships should also increase, or opportunities for friendship may be a basic condition for actual friendships. However, according to Meyer & Allen, (1991), the actual prevalence of friendship may not be related to satisfaction because it is probably necessary that the employee sees the organization as, in some way, responsible for the friendship. While, for some people, friendships increase job satisfaction, for others, may result in dissatisfaction.

3.5 Workplace Friendship and employees' intention to leave

Employee's intentions to leave have been examined in relation to workplace friendships, (Morrison, 2004; Nielsen et al. 2000; Riorden & Griffith, 1995). According to Nielsen et al., (2000) study employees those experiencing friendship with work were less likely needed to leave their current jobs and organization. Employees may satisfy by their job and stay in the organization due to their friends with the workplace. If they decided to leave their organization they feel they will lose their friends. Although few empirical studies such as, (Morrison, 2004) has been conducted on workplace friendship reduced intention to leave. However, most of these studies have not been replicated.



4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Descriptive statistics of the variables

Of the total respondents 64.4% are male. 84.9% of has a first degree and above and 78.1% of they are serving in the University for two and more years. Out of the respondent 56.5% is Academics staff.

According to the result of table 2, 232 (68%) of respondents confirmed that as they did not perceive good governance in the University. Only 270 (80%) and 294 (57%) of respondents admit the existence of opportunities for workplace friendship prevalence of workplace friendship respectively.

Table 2, also reveals that 163 (48%) of the respondents is not satisfied with their job, while 116 (34%) conform their satisfaction. On the other hand, 164(49%) of the respondent have intended to leave the university and 75 (22%) of them does not want to talk their intention. The finding of this study shows that almost all employees are dissatisfied. They intended to leave the university. However, they are happy with the opportunity and prevalence of workplace friendship.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of Independent and dependent variables

		Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Workplace friendship	59	18	47	14	232	68
	Opportunities	35	10	33	10	270	80
	Prevalence	83	25	61	16	194	57
2	Job Satisfaction	163	48	59	18	116	34
3	Employees' intention to leave	99	29	75	22	164	49

4.2 The effect of workplace friendship on Employees Job Satisfaction

Table 3, reveals the relationship between Workplace Friendship and employees' job satisfaction that there is an insignificant positive correlation between these two variables ($r^2 = .079$, $p = 0.01$). The association with Workplace Friendship and employee's intention to leave is also ($r^2 = .411$, $p = 0.05$). As it is shown in Table 3, approximately only 3% of the variability in the number of employees' job satisfaction is accounted for by its relationship to viewing workplace Friendship ($r^2 = .006$, Adjusted $r^2 = .003$, at $P = 0.148$).

4.3 The effect of workplace friendship on employees' intention to leave

Table 3 reveals the relationship between Workplace Friendship and employees' job satisfaction that there is a significant positive association between these two variables ($r^2 = .411$, $p = 0.01$).

The table also reveals that only 16.6% of the variability in number of employee's intention to leave is accounted for by its association with viewing workplace Friendship ($r^2 = .169$, Adjusted $r^2 = .166$, at $P = 0.01$).

This implies the absence of Workplace Friendship of the university has the influence on their low employees' job satisfaction and their desire to leave is high. These findings initiate the requirement of further study.

Table 3: Prediction of workplace Friendship on job satisfaction and intention to leave

Prediction of Workplace Friendship on Job Satisfaction			
Correlation(R)	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Sig.
.079	.006	.003	.148
Prediction of Workplace Friendship on employee's Intention to leave			
Correlation(R)	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Sig.
.411	.169	.166	.000 ^a



5. Conclusions

The result of the study showed that a significant number of employees perceived the presence of workplace friendship, mainly opportunities in the University. However, most of the respondents were dissatisfied with their job. They have an intention to leave the University. In this study, the effects of workplace friendship with employees' job satisfaction and retention is found to be minimal, but to accept this finding further study is required.

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